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quarter of an inch long, and the well formed cotyledons had already separated, showing the plumule which had just begun to expand. What is to be noted as curious in this case, is the fact that the seed had germinated in the intact fruit, and the cotyledons and plumule were dark-green in color. Normal germination of seeds under such circumstances is so rare that one naturally is lead to suspect that some mischievous person had inserted a germinating seed into the fruit after it had been cut open. This possibility is excluded by the positive statement of Prof. Briggs, that the fruit was brought to his table perfectly intact, that he saw it cut open, and at once noticed the green seedling which was in the center of the fruit, just where the cut was made, and escaped injury except that a small part of one of the cotyledons was cut away by the knife. The testimony is so positive that suspicion of deception is excluded, and we must believe that the seed actually germinated and bore green cotyledons and plumule while enclosed in the sound fruit.—W. G. FARLOW, *Cambridge, Mass.*

Coursetia axillaris, n. sp.—Shrub or small tree (?), the younger parts pubescent : leaves small, odd-pinnate; leaflets 3 to 5 pairs, reticulated, almost glabrous above, somewhat pubescent below (as is also the rhachis), 3 to 8 mm. long, obtuse, the lower pair orbicular, the upper pairs obovate : flowers axillary, on peduncles 4 to 10 mm. long : calyx pubescent, 4 mm. long, with 5 broad equal teeth (the 2 upper ones high connate); petals about equal in length; vexillum very broad (12 mm.) and reflexed; wings oblong: vexillary stamen free; the others equal: style slender, very hairy above the middle: ovary 2 to 8-seeded: pod 2-valved, glabrous, 3.5 cm. long, with lobed margins and on a broad stipe.—San Diego, Texas, April, 1891, (*G. C. Nealley*, 16). This plant is interesting as being an intermediate form between two closely related genera, *Coursetia* and *Sabinea*. While the general characters are those of *Coursetia*, the inflorescence is that of *Sabinea*. In habit and pods it is nearest *C. glandulosa* of Arizona and Mexico.—JOHN M. COULTER, *Crawfordsville, Ind.*

EDITORIAL.

A MOVEMENT has begun in Indiana, which may lead to good results. A teacher's "reading-circle" has been organized for some years, containing, it is claimed, 30,000 members. Different subjects are selected each year, and an executive committee directs the proper books to be read. It has been found very profitable to publishers to secure the

sale of 30,000 copies of any book they own, and to furnish with the book an "outline of study." It is not our province to speak in general of the books used, but since botany has been made one of the subjects of the present year, we may be justified in commenting upon the character of the work proposed. We are free to say that if the whole range of botanical literature had been searched, no more unsuitable book could have been found to give these teachers any conception of modern botany.

IT WAS with a feeling of curiosity that we have watched for some of the results; and they have come speedily enough in the shape of numerous letters from these struggling teachers. Their general opinion seems to be that if this is botany, they want no more of it. They are not to be blamed, for feeding on husks is never an inspiring diet; it only inspires a strong desire to leave the country of husks as speedily as possible. It is as if they were studying English literature, and instead of being directed to a study of the great masterpieces were told to memorize an English dictionary. In the "outline of study" which accompanies this glossary (by courtesy called a "botany"), a ludicrous attempt has been made to get into the current of laboratory methods. By a strange fatality, every plant whose examination is called for either does not grow in Indiana, or is to be secured months away from its natural time of appearance.

THE PROMINENT result of all this has been to disseminate a wide feeling of disgust for one of the most delightful of sciences; and the study of botany in the schools of the state has received a terrible setback. The possible movement for good, referred to in the opening sentence, is one just inaugurated by the Indiana Academy of Sciences, a thoroughly organized and vigorous body. The schools of the state and the scientific men are both so completely organized, that the influence of one can be easily brought in contact with the other. A committee of the Academy has been appointed to devise measures for securing a better grade of science teaching in the schools, and to attempt to counteract the influence of "reading circle" science. As the committee has been organized, not simply to draft resolutions, but to enter upon a practical campaign of hard work, we may look for some good results.

IT HAS OCCURRED to us that it would be well for scientific men all over the country to attack this problem in a more organized way. It is easily seen that as students pass from our well-equipped laboratories and become teachers in these schools, the leaven of scientific methods is slowly working its way through the mass. But as yet, the mass is so

vast, and the leaven is so small, that organized effort on the part of leaders in scientific work might hasten the movement.

* * *

THE SECOND part of Prof. Conway MacMillan's paper on "the three months course in botany" appears in *Education* for April. Had we anticipated another installment, we should have avoided a premature criticism, even inferentially, of his views, which are shown to be essentially in accord with those of the GAZETTE, ante, p. 120.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Trelease on *Epilobium*.¹

This is one of the most complete and satisfactory monographs we have seen. The genus is one of most perplexing character, for the species intergrade interminably. The author has wisely restrained himself from acknowledging as species all the forms that have been described as such, but he has felt compelled to publish several new ones. Not only is the geographical distribution of the species briefly considered, but the biological features connected with means of vegetative propagation, pollination, and dissemination, are noticed with that wealth of information and literature known to be in the possession of the author. The range is that of Gray's Synoptical Flora, here shown to contain 38 species of *Epilobium*. The new species are *E. ursinum*, *E. holosericeum*, *E. delicatum*, and *E. clavatum*, the first two from California, the others from the extreme N. W. states. Fourteen of the species admitted are those of Haussknecht. It would be impossible here to enumerate the changes in nomenclature involved by this monograph, as there has been such a confusion of names that only the monograph itself can make them clear. The names as they appear in Watson's Bibliographical Index are not very materially changed, but the separation of unrecognized species by Haussknecht has added many new names to that list. The illustration of every species is a very valuable feature of the work; and this leads us to remark, that accurate figures should be more extensively used in such monographs; for however faulty the text may be, good figures are records of facts that cannot well change, and are only second in value to the plants themselves.

¹TRELEASE, WILLIAM.—The species of *Epilobium* occurring north of Mexico: 50 pp. 48 plates: 8 vo. [Reprinted from second annual report of the Mo. Bot. Garden: issued April 22, 1891.]